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Khoma,dussa Sutta

The Khoma,dussa Discourse | S 7.22 [Ee S 7.2.12]

Theme: Goodness in high places

Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

1 Introduction

1.1 The Khoma,dussa Sutta (S 7.22) is perhaps one of the most “socially-engaged” encounters the Buddha has with society. He approaches a group of what we would today call the “town council” (*sabhā*). Although they scorn him at first, he responds to them with his characteristic Buddha charms—with compassion and wisdom.

1.2 Essentially, the Buddha tells the brahmin houselords—that is, the town-councillors—in his instructive verse, that:

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| (1) a town council or governing body should have morally virtuous members; | [§8a] |
| (2) when they do speak, they should do so in a wholesome <i>dhamma</i> way; | [§8b] |
| (3) when they have given up greed, hate and delusion, | [§8c] |
| (4) they will speak wholesomely and promote good, that is, personal and public benefits. | [§8b] |
| All the brahmin houselords are impressed and go for refuge in the 3 jewels. | [§9] |

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The Khoma,dussa Discourse

S 7.22

1 Thus have I heard.

2 At one time, the Blessed One was dwelling amongst the Sakyas, in a Sakya market-town called Khoma,dussa [Linen-cloth].¹

3 Then, at dawn, the Blessed One, having dressed himself, taking robe and bow, entered Khoma,dussa for alms.

4 Now, at that time, the brahmin houselords of Khoma,dussa had assembled in the council-hall for some business; and it began to drizzle.²

5 Then, the Blessed One approached the council-hall. The brahmin houselords of Khoma,dussa, seeing the Blessed One coming from afar, said:

6 “Who are these shavelings, little recluses? Don’t they know the house rules?”³

¹ Comy explains that the town was given the name because of the prevalence of linen (or flax) there (SA 1:266). This is apparently a brahmin enclave in a predominantly Sakya kshatriya territory.

² *Devo ca ekam ekaṃ phusāyati*, lit, “And it rained drop by drop.” Comy says that Buddha willed the rain to fall as an excuse for entering the council-hall (SA 1:266). On a monk willing rain to fall, see **Mahaka Pāṭihāriya S** (S 41.4), SD 27.2. On rain falling “drop by drop,” see SD 36.3 (1.1).

³ *Ke ca muṇḍakā samaṇakā, ke ca sabhā,dhammaṃ jānissantīti*. The brahmins’ hostility towards the Buddha and the monks is probably due to the brahmins living as an exclusive enclave in the Sakya territory, and also due to their ingrained class conceit. Hence, they resent the presence of the Buddha, whom they see as being a Sakya. The “house rules” (*sabhā,dhammā*) prob refer to the standing orders of the council and related rules. Comy explains

